



Wednesday, 4 October 2006

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EUROPEAN BUSINESS BACKS EU TRADE & COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGY

Until now, the crucial role of trade and investment and its impact on EU competitiveness and structural change has been the missing link in the EU's Growth and Jobs strategy. UNICE today welcomes the Commission's new Trade and Competitiveness strategy – "Global Europe: Competing in the world" – which will allow the EU to tackle the key challenges for European business in international trade, and calls on the Commission to ensure full implementation of its proposals. [Read more](#) or contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

UNICE-NIPPON KEIDANREN HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

On 29 September, UNICE President Seillière welcomed a high-level delegation from Nippon Keidanren – the Japanese Business Federation- led by its Chairman, Mr Fujio Mitarai. The meeting allowed EU and Japanese business to discuss recent economic and political developments and how to give new impetus to bilateral economic relations. As the voice of business of two of the largest economies in the world, UNICE and Nippon Keidanren also addressed global issues such as environment, energy or the WTO. The DDA negotiations remain a priority and the negotiations should be resumed as soon as possible. Contact: [Carlos González-Finat](#)



SERVICES: UNICE ASKS THE PARLIAMENT NOT TO SPOIL THE WORK DONE IN FIRST READING

In view of the discussions on the second reading amendments tabled in the EP Internal Market Committee, UNICE has sent a [letter](#) to all IMCO members urging them to endorse the Council's common position without further delay. UNICE is concerned about the amendments by the rapporteur and other IMCO members: they do not offer added value compared with the Council's text and, more importantly, modify core parts of the Council's position. Although the changes agreed in first reading diminish the potency of the Commission's initial proposal to open the market for services, UNICE considers it a first step and asks the Committee not to support the amendments tabled, acknowledging the high risks of unravelling the entire compromise. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)

THE WORLD BANK PRESENTS "DOING BUSINESS 2007"

At a presentation on 28 September, [Simeon Djankov](#) from the World Bank presented its annual report "Doing Business 2007: How to reform" under the chairmanship of David Croughan, chief economist of IBEC, acting on behalf of UNICE. The report ranks 175 economies on the ease of doing business, tracking indicators of the time and cost of meeting government requirements for business start-ups or taxation. [Marco Buti](#), Deputy Director General of DG ECFIN participated in the panel as a commentator. Contact: [Eva Maria Revilla](#)



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GROWTH AND JOBS, ENERGY AND INNOVATION

Meeting on 28 September, the UNICE Advisory and Support Group (UASG) – a network of 22 major companies supporting UNICE – discussed three business-related priorities of President Barroso with Mr Antonio Cabral, his Senior Adviser: implementation of the growth and jobs agenda, one energy policy and innovation. Ms Ulla Sirkeinen of the Confederation of Finnish Industries EK presented the Finnish Presidency's agenda, indicating where business should intervene. UASG members were also updated on the status of WTO negotiations and China/India Business Summits, the second reading on REACH in the European Parliament and the UNICE communication plan. Contact: [Wytze Russchen](#)

REACH APPROACH WORKABLE ON THE BASIS OF ADEQUATE CONTROL OF RISK

Prior to the 10 October vote on REACH in the Environment Committee, UNICE has outlined its views regarding the crucial question of the authorisation/substitution regime in a letter to members of this Committee. The EP's first reading approach on authorisation/substitution of chemicals is seen as highly problematic to European companies. It could lead to a complete ban on certain substances even though there is a clear socio-economic benefit and no alternative available. Therefore industry urges the EP to support the main thrust of the Council's common position, which is already a compromise and is considered a workable approach based on the concept of adequate control of risk. [Read more](#) or contact: [Nadine Toscani](#)

SKETCHING OUT INGREDIENTS TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT LOSING OUT ON PRODUCTIVITY

On 27 September 2006, UNICE's Social Affairs Committee adopted a report on the key challenges facing European labour markets. This study, which was presented to the ETUC during a meeting of the European social dialogue on 3 October, highlights the importance of finding new ways of providing security to workers and improving labour market flexibility in order to get Europe out of a negative trade-off between employment and productivity gains. Contact: [Steven D'Haeseleer](#)

OBJECTIONS TO EU LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON TRANSNATIONAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONFIRMED

On 26 September 2006, UNICE organised a seminar to exchange experiences on international framework agreements. It involved representatives of multinational companies which have signed agreements with workers representatives at international level as well as enterprises which have not. A draft study of some 48 International Framework Agreements by ORSE, a French think tank working on corporate social responsibility, kicked off the discussion. This confirmed that companies having adopted international framework agreements did not encounter legal obstacles and that the nature of these texts could not be compared with collective agreements. Contact: [Jeanne Schmitt](#)

TV WITHOUT FRONTIERS: NINE INDUSTRY PRIORITIES FOR REVIEW OF EXISTING DIRECTIVE

With the European Parliament and the Council assessing the Commission's proposal for the revision of the "TV Without Frontiers" directive, UNICE has outlined nine key industry priorities to be taken into account during the review. European industry strongly recommends that the revised directive defines what audiovisual service types are covered and clarifies the distinctions between these services. Furthermore, in line with better regulation principles, it is essential that self- and co-regulation is used, which better suits the fast-moving nature of technology and allows for greater flexibility in adapting to change. [Read more](#) or contact: [Miriam Munnich](#)